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SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE MOCKUS MARGINALIZED BY HIS  
OWN IDEALISM

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Summary  
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¶1. (SBU) In December 2005 Antanas Mockus was a popular, two-time former mayor of Bogota boasting favorability ratings of 53.2% in Gallup polls. Of the current presidential candidates, only incumbent Alvaro Uribe was viewed more favorably. Despite this, the Mockus campaign has been unable to gain traction and the candidate himself appears to be headed for an embarrassing showing in the May 28 presidential elections, matching the poor results of his candidates in the March congressional elections. Mockus' unrelenting idealism and refusal to engage in "traditional politics" have failed to attract voters and driven away potential political allies, marginalizing him for now in Colombian politics. End Summary.

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Like Uribe, But Not So Political  
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¶2. (SBU) On May 22 Poloff met with Maria Isabel Patino, vice presidential running mate to Antanas Mockus. She was quick to point out that Mockus, platform closely mirrors Uribe, in his support for the FTA, support for the Justice and Peace Law and refusal to negotiate with guerrillas. However, it attacks Uribe for having "dictatorial tendencies" and a "willingness to compromise when politically expedient." Patino said the Electoral Guarantees Law gives the incumbent too many advantages over challengers and Uribe is "using these advantages to weaken democracy." She compared Uribe's habit of promising to address individual grievances at campaign rallies to Hugo Chavez' television program, "Alo Presidente," and said she expected him to attempt to modify the constitution again in order to run for president in 2010. She criticized Uribe's decision to avoid televised debates as undemocratic, while recognizing that it was politically advantageous. She admitted that the strategy of criticizing Uribe personally while supporting his policies has not been politically successful. The Mockus campaign's failure to differentiate themselves from Uribe kept them from luring away his supporters, she said.

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View Political Compromises as a Sign of Weakness  
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¶3. (SBU) Patino happily conceded that she and Mockus are not good politicians, suggesting that their low poll numbers are a badge of honor and demonstrate their uncompromising ideals. She criticized the other campaigns for making promises that will be difficult to fulfill and proudly stated that, if

elected, Mockus would not follow the practice of giving government jobs to political supporters. Patino said this refusal to play politics scared away many potential supporters who see little opportunities for personal gain by voting for Mockus or working in his campaign.

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Recognize Their Position, But Not Changing  
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¶4. (SBU) In Patino's view, the party system is re-solidifying; after this election, there will "no longer be a place for independent candidates." She lamented that limited federal funding for the major candidates has forced independents to spend more time searching for funds and less time spreading their message. (Her office was filled with donated artwork from a recent auction held to raise funds for the campaign.) She said Mockus' personal image, more than his message, has kept the campaign going. Nonetheless, Mockus refuses to join a political party and says he will remain a lonely voice in the opposition after the election. She said he prefers to stand on his ideals even at the expense of his political career. This stand has marginalized Mockus as a player in Colombian politics.

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Bio Note  
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¶5. (U) Patino is a maritime and trade lawyer with degrees from Los Andes University in Bogota and Tulane University. She also studied at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to joining the Mockus campaign she worked as a lawyer for the Colombian flower industry. Her

father and two American citizen sisters currently live in the United States.  
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